UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI SOUTHEASTERN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)	
Plaintiff,)	
v.)	No.
FIFTY-ONE THOUSAND, NINE HUNDRED FORTY DOLLARS IN U.S. CURRENCY (\$51,940.00),)))	
Defendant.)	

VERIFIED COMPLAINT OF FORFEITURE

COMES NOW, Plaintiff, United States of America, by and through its attorneys, Jeffrey B. Jensen, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri, and Lindsay McClure-Hartman, Assistant United States Attorney for said district, and for its Verified Complaint for Forfeiture states as follows:

NATURE OF THE ACTION

- 1. This is a civil action *in rem* brought by the United States of America seeking forfeiture of all right, title and interest in the above captioned defendant property pursuant to Title 21, United States Code, Section 881(a)(6), and Title 18, United States Code, Sections 981(a)(1)(A) and (C).
- 2. The defendant property was seized by law enforcement on or about March 1, 2020, and is more fully described as fifty-one thousand, nine hundred forty dollars in U.S. currency (\$51,940.00).

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JURISDICTION AND VENUE

3. The Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to Title 28, United States Code, Sections 1345, 1355, and 1395.

4. Venue is proper pursuant to Title 28, United States Code, Section 1355(b)(1)(A) because the acts and omissions giving rise to forfeiture took place in the Eastern District of Missouri. Venue is also proper pursuant to Title 28, United States Code, Section 1395(b) because the defendant currency was seized in the Eastern District of Missouri.

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

- 5. Title 21, United States Code, Section 881(a)(6) authorizes the civil forfeiture of "all moneys, negotiable instruments, securities, or other things of value furnished or intended to be furnished by any person in exchange for a controlled substance or listed chemical in violation of this subchapter, all proceeds traceable to such an exchange, and all moneys, negotiable instruments, and securities used or intended to be used to facilitate any violation of this subchapter."
- 6. Title 18, United States Code, Section 1956(a)(1)(A)(i) criminalizes conducting a transaction, including transferring, delivering, or other disposition, knowing that such transaction represents the proceeds of some form of unlawful activity and that in fact involves the proceeds of a specific unlawful activity, including violations of the Controlled Substances Act, with the intent to promote the carrying on of the specified unlawful activity.
- 7. Title 18, United States Code, Section 1956(a)(1)(B) criminalizes conducting a transaction, including transfer, delivery, or other disposition, knowing that such transaction represents the proceeds of some form of unlawful activity and that in fact involves the proceeds of a specific unlawful activity, including violations of the Controlled Substances Act, knowing that

the transaction is designed in whole or in part to conceal or disguise the nature, location, source, ownership, or control of the proceeds of specified unlawful activity.

- 8. Pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 981(a)(1)(A), any property, real or personal, involved in a transaction or attempted transaction in violation of section 1956 of Title 18, or any property traceable to such property, is subject to civil forfeiture.
- 9. Title 18, United States Code, Section 1952 criminalizes traveling in interstate commerce with the intent to distribute the proceeds of any unlawful activity, including a business enterprise involving controlled substances, or otherwise promoting, managing, establishing, carry on, or facilitating the promotion, management, establishment, or carrying on, of such unlawful activity.
- 10. Pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 981(a)(1)(C), any property, real or personal, which constitutes or is derived from proceeds traceable to a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1952 is subject to civil forfeiture.

FACTS GIVING RISE TO FORFEITURE

- 11. On or about March 1, 2020, law enforcement officers conducted a traffic stop of a dark blue 2019 Chevrolet Suburban ("Suburban") traveling northbound on Interstate 55 near mile marker 30 in New Madrid County, Missouri, within the Eastern District of Missouri.
- 12. Ziad K. Dawas ("Dawas"), who resides in San Ramon, California, was the driver and Ali N. Alkhatib ("Alkhatib"), who resides in Chicago, Illinois, was the passenger of the vehicle.
 - 13. Alkhatib has prior arrests related to narcotics possession.
- 14. An officer approached the vehicle and asked Dawas and Alkhatib for their licenses and vehicle registration. The officer noticed that Dawas' hands were shaking when he offered his

license. The officer also noticed that both Dawas and Alkhatib had short and rapid breathing.

- 15. The vehicle registration showed that the Suburban was rented in San Francisco, California on February 7, 2020.
- 16. The officer asked Dawas if he would accompany him to the patrol car while he conducted a records check, and he agreed.
- 17. While conducting record checks, the officer asked Dawas about his travels. Dawas stated he was coming from Memphis, Tennessee where he had been visiting a friend for two days. The officer asked where they stayed and Dawas stated, "This place, we just partied and went to this club, I don't even remember the name of it." Dawas continued to act nervously, trembling in the passenger seat and constantly stroking his hair.
- 18. The officer asked Dawas where he worked and he said he owned a "smoke shop" in California and was also a driver for Uber and Lyft. The officer asked how long he had the rental vehicle and he said he rented it on February 7, 2020. The officer asked why he had the vehicle for so long and Dawas rambled some information and never answered the question.
- 19. The officer asked Dawas if there was anything illegal in the Suburban. Dawas looked down and said no. The officer asked if there was any currency in the vehicle and he said, "No, the passenger has about \$1,700.00 on him."
- 20. The officer asked Dawas if they had any large amounts of marijuana and he said no.
- 21. The officer asked Dawas for consent to search the vehicle and he said no. The officer asked for consent to search his person and he granted consent. The officer did not discover anything illegal on Dawas.
 - 22. The officer went back to the Suburban and spoke with Alkhatib, who was the

primary renter of the vehicle. The officer asked Alkhatib for consent to search the vehicle and he said no. The officer asked Alkhatib for consent to search his person and he granted consent. The officer did not discover anything illegal on Alkhatib.

- 23. Other officers arrived on the scene and deployed a trained, certified, and reliable drug detection canine for a free air sniff of the vehicle. The canine alerted positively to the presence of a controlled substance at or near the vehicle.
- 24. Officers informed Alkhatib that the canine gave a positive alert to the presence of narcotics at or near his vehicle, and that they had probable cause to search the vehicle.
- 25. During a search of the vehicle, officers located an empty freezer sealed package and marijuana residue in the backseat behind the driver's and passenger's seat.
- 26. Officers located bundled U.S. Currency in the glove box, later determined to be \$2,000.00. A McDonald's bag was located behind the passenger's seat and it contained seven bundles of U.S. Currency. Each bundle was \$1,000.00 U.S. Currency.
- 27. An officer approached Dawas and Alkhatib and read them their Miranda rights. Dawas and Alkhatib said they understood. The officer also told them they were not under arrest and Dawas and Alkhatib said they understood.
- 28. Officers returned to the Suburban and continued the search. An officer discovered a factory concealed compartment around the radio. The officer raised the screen on the radio and discovered a large amount of bundled U.S. Currency.
 - 29. Alkhatib then stated there was around \$50,000.00 U.S. Currency in the vehicle.
- 30. Officers had the Suburban towed to a nearby towing facility for a further search.

 Dawas and Alkhatib were transported in patrol vehicles, following behind the towed Suburban
 - 31. Officers conducted a further search of the Suburban and found receipts and a

detailed drug ledger.

- 32. Dawas and Alkhatib both declined to be interviewed.
- 33. The official count of the U.S. Currency was \$51,940.00, consisting of mainly \$20 bills.

<u>COUNT ONE - FORFEITURE</u> 21 U.S.C. § 881(a)(6)

- 34. The United States incorporates by reference the allegations set forth in Paragraphs 1 to 33 above as if fully set forth herein.
- 35. The defendant property is bulk U.S. currency that was discovered in rubber-banded bundles inside a fast food bag, factory concealed compartment and glove compartment in a vehicle being driven by Dawas with Alkhatib as a passenger. A trained, certified and reliable narcotics canine alerted to the presence of a controlled substance on the defendant property.
- 36. Based on the foregoing, the defendant property is subject to forfeiture pursuant to Title 21, United States Code, Section 881(a)(6) as money furnished or intended to be furnished in exchange for a controlled substance, as proceeds traceable to such an exchange, and as money to be used to facilitate a violation of the Controlled Substances Act.

<u>COUNT TWO - FORFEITURE</u> 18 U.S.C. § **981**(a)(1)(A)

- 37. The United States incorporates by reference the allegations set forth in Paragraphs 1 to 33 above as if fully set forth herein.
- 38. The defendant property is proceeds of an unlawful activity involving controlled substances and was transported through the Eastern District of Missouri by Dawas and Alkhatib with the intent to promote the carrying on of, and to conceal or disguise the nature, location, source, ownership or control of, a specified unlawful activity.

39. Based on the foregoing, the defendant property is subject to forfeiture, pursuant to Title 18, United Stated Code, Section 981(a)(1)(A) as property involved in a transaction or attempted transaction in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1956, or as property traceable to such property.

COUNT THREE - FORFEITURE18 U.S.C. § 981(a)(1)(C)

- 40. The United States incorporates by reference the allegations set forth in Paragraphs 1 to 33 above as if fully set forth herein.
- 41. The defendant property is proceeds of an unlawful activity involving controlled substances that travelled with Dawas and Alkhatib in interstate commerce with the intent to distribute it, and otherwise promote, manage, establish, carry on, or facilitate the promotion, management, establishment, or carrying on, of an unlawful activity involving controlled substances.
- 42. Based on the foregoing, the defendant property is subject to forfeiture, pursuant to Title 18, United Stated Code, Section 981(a)(1)(C) as property that constitutes or is derived from proceeds traceable to a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1952.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the United States of America prays that a Warrant for Arrest be issued in rem for the defendant property and the defendant property be condemned and forfeited to the United States of America, in accordance with the provisions of law; and that the United States of

America be awarded its costs in this action, and have such other relief as provided by law and the nature of the case may require.

Respectfully submitted,

JEFFREY B. JENSEN United States Attorney

Facsimile:

/s/ Lindsay McClure-Hartman LINDSAY MCCLURE-HARTMAN, #66070(MO) Assistant United States Attorney 111 South 10th Street, Suite 20.333 Saint Louis, Missouri 63102 Telephone: (314) 539-2200

Lindsay.McClure-Hartman@usdoj.gov

(314) 539-2777

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VERIFICATION

I, Special Agent Christopher M. Turner, hereby verify and declare under penalty of perjury that I am a Special Agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration, that I have read the foregoing Verified Complaint in rem and know the contents thereof, and that the matters contained in the Verified Complaint are true to my own knowledge, except that those matters herein stated to be alleged on information and belief and as to those matters I believe them to be true.

The sources of my knowledge and information and the grounds of my belief are the official files and records of the United States, information supplied to me by other law enforcement officers, as well as my investigation of this case, together with others, as a Special Agent of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on:

Special Agent

Christopher M. Turner

Drug Enforcement Administration

SJS 44 (Rev. 11/04)

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The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE REVERSE OF THE FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS			DEFENDANTS		
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES) (c) Attorney's (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)			County of Residence of First Listed Defendant (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY) NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE LAND INVOLVED. Attorneys (If Known)		
II. BASIS OF JURISD	ICTION (Place an "X" in	One Box Only)	. CITIZENSHIP OF P	PRINCIPAL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff
□ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	3 Federal Question (U.S. Government)		(For Diversity Cases Only)	FF DEF ☐ 1 Incorporated or Pr of Business In Thi	and One Box for Defendant) PTF DEF rincipal Place
☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant	☐ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenshi	p of Parties in Item III)		2 Incorporated and I of Business In .	Another State
W. NAWYDE OF CHI	n		Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country	I 3 ☐ 3 Foreign Nation	□ 6 □ 6
IV. NATURE OF SUIT	(Place an "X" in One Box Onl		FORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES
□ 110 Insurance □ 120 Marine □ 130 Miller Act □ 140 Negotiable Instrument □ 150 Recovery of Overpayment ∞ Enforcement of Judgment □ 151 Medicare Act □ 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excl. Veterans) □ 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits □ 160 Stockholders' Suits □ 190 Other Contract □ 195 Contract Product Liability □ 196 Franchise REAL PROPERTY □ 210 Land Condemnation □ 220 Foreclosure □ 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment □ 240 Torts to Land □ 245 Tort Product Liability □ 290 All Other Real Property	PERSONAL INJURY 310 Airplane 315 Airplane Product Liability 320 Assault, Libel & Slander 330 Federal Employers' Liability 340 Marine 345 Marine Product Liability 350 Motor Vehicle Product Liability 360 Other Personal Injury CIVIL RIGHTS 441 Voting 442 Employment 443 Housing/ Accommodations 444 Welfare	PERSONAL INJURY 362 Personal Injury - Med. Malpractice 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPERTY 370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lending 380 Other Personal Property Damage 700 Step Personal Property Damage Product Liability PRISONER PETITIONS 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence Habeas Corpus: 530 General 535 Death Penalty 540 Mandamus & Other 550 Civil Rights 555 Prison Condition	☐ 610 Agriculture ☐ 620 Other Food & Drug ☐ 625 Drug Related Seizure	□ 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 □ 423 Withdrawal	□ 400 State Reapportionment □ 410 Antitrust □ 430 Banks and Banking □ 450 Commerce □ 460 Deportation □ 470 Racketeer Influenced and □ Corrupt Organizations □ 480 Consumer Credit □ 490 Cable/Sat TV □ 810 Selective Service □ 850 Securities/Commodities/ □ Exchange □ 875 Customer Challenge □ 12 USC 3410 □ 890 Other Statutory Actions □ 891 Agricultural Acts □ 892 Economic Stabilization Act □ 893 Environmental Matters □ 894 Energy Allocation Act □ 895 Freedom of Information Act □ 900Appeal of Fee Determination Under Equal Access to Justice □ 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes
□1 Original □2 R	tate Court	Remanded from Appellate Court stute under which you are f			
VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO	Brief description of ca	iuse:			
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	☐ CHECK IF THIS UNDER F.R.C.P.	IS A CLASS ACTION 23	DEMAND \$	CHECK YES only JURY DEMAND	if demanded in complaint:
VIII. RELATED CASI IF ANY	E(S) (See instructions):	JUDGE		DOCKET NUMBER	
DATE		SIGNATURE OF ATTO	RNEY OF RECORD		
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY					
RECEIPT #	MOUNT	APPLYING IFP	JUDGE	MAG. JUI	DGE

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JS 44 Reverse (Rev. 11/04)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET FORM JS 44

Authority For Civil Cover Sheet

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and service of pleading or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. The attorney filing a case should complete the form as follows:

- I. (a) Plaintiffs-Defendants. Enter names (last, first, middle initial) of plaintiff and defendant. If the plaintiff or defendant is a government agency, use only the full name or standard abbreviations. If the plaintiff or defendant is an official within a government agency, identify first the agency and then the official, giving both name and title.
- (b) County of Residence. For each civil case filed, except U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county where the first listed plaintiff resides at the time of filing. In U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county in which the first listed defendant resides at the time of filing. (NOTE: In land condemnation cases, the county of residence of the "defendant" is the location of the tract of land involved.)
- (c) Attorneys. Enter the firm name, address, telephone number, and attorney of record. If there are several attorneys, list them on an attachment, noting in this section "(see attachment)".
- **II. Jurisdiction**. The basis of jurisdiction is set forth under Rule 8(a), F.R.C.P., which requires that jurisdictions be shown in pleadings. Place an "X" in one of the boxes. If there is more than one basis of jurisdiction, precedence is given in the order shown below.

United States plaintiff. (1) Jurisdiction based on 28 U.S.C. 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included here.

United States defendant. (2) When the plaintiff is suing the United States, its officers or agencies, place an "X" in this box.

Federal question. (3) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1331, where jurisdiction arises under the Constitution of the United States, an amendment to the Constitution, an act of Congress or a treaty of the United States. In cases where the U.S. is a party, the U.S. plaintiff or defendant code takes precedence, and box 1 or 2 should be marked.

Diversity of citizenship. (4) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1332, where parties are citizens of different states. When Box 4 is checked, the citizenship of the different parties must be checked. (See Section III below; federal question actions take precedence over diversity cases.)

- III. Residence (citizenship) of Principal Parties. This section of the JS 44 is to be completed if diversity of citizenship was indicated above. Mark this section for each principal party.
- IV. Nature of Suit. Place an "X" in the appropriate box. If the nature of suit cannot be determined, be sure the cause of action, in Section VI below, is sufficient to enable the deputy clerk or the statistical clerks in the Administrative Office to determine the nature of suit. If the cause fits more than one nature of suit, select the most definitive.
- V. Origin. Place an "X" in one of the seven boxes.

Original Proceedings. (1) Cases which originate in the United States district courts.

Removed from State Court. (2) Proceedings initiated in state courts may be removed to the district courts under Title 28 U.S.C., Section 1441. When the petition for removal is granted, check this box.

Remanded from Appellate Court. (3) Check this box for cases remanded to the district court for further action. Use the date of remand as the filing date.

Reinstated or Reopened. (4) Check this box for cases reinstated or reopened in the district court. Use the reopening date as the filing date.

Transferred from Another District. (5) For cases transferred under Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1404(a). Do not use this for within district transfers or multidistrict litigation transfers.

Multidistrict Litigation. (6) Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1407. When this box is checked, do not check (5) above.

Appeal to District Judge from Magistrate Judgment. (7) Check this box for an appeal from a magistrate judge's decision.

- VI. Cause of Action. Report the civil statute directly related to the cause of action and give a brief description of the cause. **Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity**. Example: U.S. Civil Statute: 47 USC 553
 Brief Description: Unauthorized reception of cable service
- VII. Requested in Complaint. Class Action. Place an "X" in this box if you are filing a class action under Rule 23, F.R.Cv.P.

Demand. In this space enter the dollar amount (in thousands of dollars) being demanded or indicate other demand such as a preliminary injunction.

Jury Demand. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not a jury is being demanded.

VIII. Related Cases. This section of the JS 44 is used to reference related pending cases if any. If there are related pending cases, insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judge names for such cases.

Date and Attorney Signature. Date and sign the civil cover sheet.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

plaintiff, v.))) Case No.)
defendant.)
ORIGINAL	FILING FORM
THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AN INITIATING A NEW CASE.	ND VERIFIED BY THE FILING PARTY WHEN
THIS CAUSE, OR A SUBSTANTIALLY	Y EQUIVALENT COMPLAINT, WAS
PREVIOUSLY FILED IN THIS COURT AS	CASE NUMBER
AND ASSIGNED TO THE HONORABLE J	UDGE
NEITHER THIS CAUSE, NOR A SUBS	TANTIALLY EQUIVALENT COMPLAINT,
PREVIOUSLY HAS BEEN FILED IN THIS	COURT, AND THEREFORE MAY BE
OPENED AS AN ORIGINAL PROCEEDING	G.
The undersigned affirms that the information	ion provided above is true and correct.
Date:	
	Signature of Filing Party

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI EASTERN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)	
Plaintiff,)	
V.)	No.
FIFTY-ONE THOUSAND, NINE HUNDRED FORTY DOLLARS IN U.S.)	
CURRENCY (\$51,940.00),)	
Defendant.)	

WARRANT FOR ARREST OF PROPERTY

TO: THE UNITED STATES MARSHAL AND/OR ANY OTHER DULY AUTHORIZED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

Whereas, on August 18, 2020, the United States of America filed a Verified Complaint for Civil Forfeiture in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, against the above-named defendant property, alleging that said property is subject to seizure and civil forfeiture to the United States for the reasons mentioned in the complaint; and

WHEREAS, the defendant property is currently in the possession, custody, or control of the United States; and

WHEREAS, in these circumstances, Supplemental Rule G(3)(b)(i) directs the Clerk of the Court to issue an arrest warrant in rem for the arrest of the defendant property; and

WHEREAS, Supplemental Rule G(3)(c) provides that the warrant of arrest in rem must be delivered to a person or organization authorized to execute it;

NOW THEREFORE, you are hereby commanded to arrest the above-named defendant property by serving a copy of this warrant on the custodian in whose possession, custody, or

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control the property is presently found, and to use whatever means may be appropriate to protect and maintain it in your custody until further order of this Court,

YOU ARE FURTHER COMMANDED, promptly after execution of this process, to file the same in this Court with your return thereon, identifying the individuals upon whom copies were served and the manner employed.

GREGORY J. LINHARES, CLERK United States District Court

By:			
-	Deputy Clerk		
Date	:		